

Notes from Christi's Mom

When Christi died I felt the finality of the word "GONE" so strongly! I wanted to scream to the world, "Stop the World!!! My baby just died!!!" Many people told me the names and phone numbers of people they knew whose baby had died...hoping that since they did not feel adequate to give any comfort that maybe these individuals could make up for their inadequacy. It didn't! It meant nothing to me! My baby had died and that's all that mattered.

What I thought I'd do is just jot down some excerpts from notes I took soon after she died about some experiences we had. Maybe some of these will help you feel more free to express your feelings, know that these thoughts and feelings are common, and may help you adjust. You don't ever get over your baby's death...you work through it.

- ▲ When and what do we do with our baby's clothes, toys, diapers, crib, stroller?
- ▲ I wanted another child right away. But then, what of the possibility of having to experience this type of hurt again?
- ▲ Reliving the memory of walking into the room and finding her, haunts me even now. I had taken a shower before that and felt responsible for not going in sooner. (An irrational thought. She had died five hours earlier, not 20 minutes earlier.)
- ▲ Afraid of walking around the house in the dark. Didn't want to go out into the garage at night. (Lasted for a few months.)
- ▲ Worried that she suffered anguish alone. The coroner confirmed that when a baby suddenly dies this way they feel no pain.
- ▲ My role, my identity. I was a parent and a mommy one moment and now...I'm a mommy without a baby to be a mommy to!
- ▲ I had difficulty allowing myself enjoyment, sexual pleasure. How could I have enjoyment in bed when she died in bed?! On the other hand, my husband wanted the closeness.
- ▲ In public it seems that I "seek out" and notice other children, babies especially. That hurts me. Why do I do it?
- ▲ How can I ever feel that purposeful again (as when I was taking care of Christi)? Nothing seems important.
- ▲ No energy or drive. Afraid to rest because I don't want to think about Christi, and get sad and just sob.
- ▲ Her room gives me an eerie feeling. I walk slower and lighter into it and kind of look around. Why?
- ▲ Should we sell the house?

- ▲ It seems harder for me than my husband. Why? Should I hurry up and get to where he seems to be? (By talking about this, I discovered that he hurt just as much, if not more. He just didn't cry as often as I did.)
- ▲ Why do I sometimes feel the urgency to tell people what's happened to me?
- ▲ I seem to miss her more at certain times (upon waking, midday, evening/night).
- ▲ My husband doesn't like the feeling of his baby getting farther and farther away from him. Moving from having her in the present to having her memory.
- ▲ Difficult to concentrate for long periods of time. My husband questioned the purpose of everything...especially his job.
- ▲ Suddenly I felt scared and almost suicidal one time even when among people at a store. I felt like, "What's the use? Why go on living?"
- ▲ Know that when you get "short" with each other, it can be because of the depression and frustration over the death of your child, not because of anything seriously wrong between you and your spouse. Give each other a lot of room to be angry once in awhile, and don't take it personally.
- ▲ We felt guilty and replayed the event. Could we have prevented it? Did we hear her cry or not? Did we, and ignore it? (The coroner and county public health nurse confirmed that there was nothing we could have done and that the baby did not cry out.)
- ▲ Listening to my husband's breathing at night in bed and thinking that I couldn't handle another death at home.
- ▲ Should we leave her picture up around the home or not?
- ▲ I don't want to feel the emotional pain and torture that her death causes me, yet I don't really want to let it go. Somehow this validates to me the degree to which I loved and still love her.
- ▲ "I do, but I don't" want to look at a video we have of Christi that includes shots taken as recently as ten days before her death.
- ▲ I like even today to show off my favorite pictures of Christi which I keep in my wallet.

*Christi's mom wrote down these thoughts four months after Christi died.
She hopes they help you as you are grieving your baby's death.*

***In memory of Christi Ann Ruttencutter
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California SIDS Program • 3164 Gold Camp Drive, Suite 220 • Rancho Cordova, CA 95670-6052
916-266-SIDS (7437) • 800-369-SIDS (7437) • FAX 916-266-7439
info@californiasids.com • www.californiasids.com